

Federation of St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools



Mobile Phone Use Policy

Date policy reviewed by the Governing Body: Autumn 2026
Date policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2028

The Federation of St Charles and St Mary's Catholic Primary Schools

Vision and Values

Together in faith, we love and learn

The Federation of St Charles and St Mary's is a welcoming and nurturing community where every child, family, and staff member is valued and supported. We embrace and celebrate the richness of our diverse backgrounds, fostering a sense of belonging for all—those of all faiths and those with no religious belief. Within this inclusive environment, we are guided by a distinctive Catholic ethos that shapes our shared values:

- Respect
- Inclusion
- Aspiration
- Responsibility
- Harmony.

We respect and value the cultural diversity of our community, in which everyone works together in harmony to uphold the dignity of each individual. We provide high standards of education, a love of learning and pastoral care, all guided by the Gospel values.

Recognising parents as the first educators, we work in partnership with our families to create an inclusive environment where everyone feels happy, safe, and valued and each child flourishes and achieves success.

Our Federation aims to:

- Put Christ at the heart of all that we do;
- Work in partnership with families, the parish and the wider community to ensure all children fulfil their full potential academically, spiritually, socially and morally and to develop children's unique talents;
- Provide a high quality, fully inclusive education for all pupils across the curriculum that builds independence and responsibility;
- Foster a culture where children are enabled to build self-esteem and positive relationships with those around them, together with a respect for the values, beliefs and feelings of others and where they feel safe, valued and loved;
- Ensure all children are well-prepared for the next stage of education and beyond so they can become respectful citizens contributing to the common good and serving others;
- Foster environmental stewardship and empower our children to take action to care for and protect our planet, now and for the future;
- Support children to deepen their faith, developing their relationship with God and others.

We deliver a carefully designed, aspirational curriculum that promotes curiosity, confidence, and resilience, enabling children to take responsibility for their own learning. Children engage in all subjects both academic and creative with daily reflection reinforcing their personal growth. We carefully plan for progression for each child, enabling them to become skilled learners in a wide range of disciplines.

Together, we remain dedicated to providing a nurturing, faith-filled, and aspirational environment, instilling confidence, purpose, and belief in every child as they embark on their educational journey and beyond.

Mobile Phone Policy

Introduction

The Department for Education's statutory guidance on mobile phones in schools requires schools to be mobile phone-free environments by default and expects pupils not to have access to mobile phones throughout the school day, including lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime. This policy sets out how the Federation implements that expectation while making appropriate provision for exceptional circumstances, including reasonable adjustments and agreed safeguarding, medical or accessibility needs. It should be read alongside the Federation Behaviour Policy, Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy, Online Safety Policy, ICT Acceptable Use arrangements and Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance.

Examples of misuse of mobile phones

- Online bullying by text, image and email messaging
- Taking and sharing inappropriate pictures of children and/or adults
- Access to inappropriate websites bypassing the school filtering system
- General disruption to learning caused by pupils accessing phones in lessons
- Making disrespectful comments, misrepresenting events or making defamatory remarks about teachers or other pupils
- Pupils phoning parents immediately following an incident so that the ability of staff to deal with an incident is compromised
- Pupils posting material on social network sites with no thought to the risks to their personal reputation and sometimes with the deliberate intention of causing harm to others
- The deliberate engineering of situations where people's reactions are filmed or photographed in order to humiliate, embarrass and intimidate by publishing to a wider audience such as on Facebook, YouTube or TikTok
- Publishing photographs of vulnerable pupils, who may be on a child protection plan, where this may put them at additional risk
- The use of a mobile phone for 'sexting' (the deliberate taking and sending of provocative images or text messages).

Federation Rules for the Acceptable Use of a Mobile Phones in Our Schools by Pupils

Reception to Year 4 pupils are forbidden from bringing a personal mobile phone to school. If a child in these year groups brings a phone to school, the agreed procedure is that this will be handed over to a member of staff who will send it to the office for safekeeping during the day. This can then be collected at the end of the day from the office by a parent.

Where a Year 5 or Year 6 pupil brings a mobile phone because they travel independently, the phone must be named, switched off and handed to the designated staff member at the beginning of the school day. It will be kept securely and returned at the end of the school day. Pupils must not access the device during the school day, including at break and lunchtime.

- Mobile phones must remain switched off and securely stored throughout the school day, including lessons, the time between lessons, breaktimes and lunchtime.

- Pupils must not use a mobile phone or similar personal smart device to photograph, film, record audio, send messages or access online content while on the school premises unless a specific exception has been authorised.
- The phone will be kept in the main office or an alternative secure place during the school day.

Exceptions and reasonable adjustments: The Federation may permit limited possession or use where this is necessary because of an individual pupil's medical needs, disability/SEND, accessibility or communication needs, safeguarding circumstances, caring responsibilities or another exceptional circumstance. Any exception will be agreed by the Head of School/Executive Head Teacher and will be proportionate, clearly defined and reviewed as appropriate.

- The school will not be held responsible for the security of a mobile phone brought into school unless they are handed in for safekeeping.
- Where a phone or device is confiscated, any search of the device or its data will only be undertaken where there are lawful grounds and by an authorised member of staff, in accordance with the Federation's Behaviour Policy and the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance. The reason for the search and action taken will be recorded where appropriate.

Misuse of mobile phones

Appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines following the school's discipline and behaviour policy. In the case of repeated misuse, the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the school by appointment to collect the phone. This may be at the end of a week, a half term or longer.

Serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of the mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions, up to and including exclusion from school. In some instances, an offence may have to be reported to the Police.

If a pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil or member of staff, the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. School will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be involved.

Dealing with the misuse of mobile phones.

It is expected that most incidents of misuse of the mobile phone will be dealt with using the same principles set out in our schools' Behaviour Policies, with the response being proportionate to the severity of the misuse.

However, more serious incidents of misuse of the mobile phone (see below) may result in more severe sanctions and involve the governing body.

Our schools will consider any of the following unacceptable uses of the mobile phone as a serious breach of the school's behaviour policy resulting in more serious sanctions being taken:

- Photographing or filming staff or other pupils during the school day and on organised school events
- Photographing or filming in toilets, swimming pools, changing rooms and similar areas
- Bullying, harassing or intimidating staff or pupils by the use of text, email or

multimedia messaging, sending inappropriate messages or posts to social networking or blogging sites

- Refusing to switch a phone off or handing over the phone at the request of a member of staff
- Using the mobile phone outside school hours to intimidate or upset staff and/or pupils will be considered a breach of these guidelines in the same way as unacceptable use which takes place in school time.

Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a pupil has an item that may be searched for under the school rules, authorised staff may search the pupil or their possessions in accordance with the DfE Searching, Screening and Confiscation guidance. A search of device content will only be undertaken where the legal conditions are met and only to the extent necessary and proportionate. Any search must be properly recorded, including the time, who was present, the reason for the search and what was found.

Where evidence is identified, the school may preserve it in accordance with safeguarding, behaviour, data protection and police procedures. Staff should not routinely copy, download or retain personal content unnecessarily. Where suspected criminal activity or safeguarding concerns arise, the DSL and/or police will be consulted as appropriate.

Serious misuse may lead to the confiscation of the mobile phone, communication with parents and the imposition of other sanctions, up to and including exclusion from school. In some instances, an offence may have to be reported to the Police.

Our schools will ensure all staff know the correct procedure to follow where a mobile phone has been confiscated. This will ensure that the confiscation is correctly recorded and that the phone is kept securely. Should an incident occur then the appropriate school will also need to ensure that support is provided for the victim.

Sanctions

Appropriate action will be taken against those who are in breach of the acceptable use guidelines following the appropriate School's behaviour policy. In addition

- Pupils and their parents should be very clear that the pupil's school is within its rights to confiscate the phone where the guidelines have been breached. If a phone is confiscated, the pupil's school will make it clear for how long this will be and the procedure to be followed for its return.
- Police will be informed if there is a serious misuse of the mobile phone where criminal activity is suspected.
- If a pupil commits an act which causes serious harassment, alarm or distress to another pupil or member of staff, the ultimate sanction may be permanent exclusion. The pupil's school will consider the impact on the victim of the act in deciding the sanction and parents will be involved.

Confiscation Procedure

If it becomes necessary to confiscate a mobile phone:

- The pupil or their parent will be informed of the procedure to be followed for its

return.

- The confiscation will be recorded by the school for monitoring purposes (See Appendix 1)
- Schools will ensure that confiscated equipment is stored in a named bag so that it is returned to the correct person.
- In the case of repeated misuse the phone will only be returned to a parent/carer who will be required to visit the pupil's school by appointment to collect the phone. This may be at the end of a week, a half term or longer.
- Where a pupil persistently breaches the guidelines, following a clear warning, the Executive Head/Head of school may impose an outright ban from bringing a mobile phone to school. This may be a fixed period or permanent ban.

Where the Phone Has Been Used For an Unacceptable Purpose

Where a member of staff conducting a search **suspects they may find an indecent image of a child**, they should:

- **never intentionally view the image**
- **never copy, print, share, store or save it**
- confiscate the device
- avoid looking at the device
- refer the incident to the **DSL or deputy**

If a safeguarding concern is identified, the matter must be referred promptly to the DSL. The school will not ask pupils to forward, copy or circulate intimate images.

Using mobile phones during After School Clubs

If a child is attending an after-school club, their mobile phone will remain securely stored until the end of the club session, unless the club is operating outside the school day and the school has expressly agreed an alternative arrangement. The phone remains subject to this policy and the Behaviour Policy.

Where an exception permits a pupil to have access to a phone during an after-school activity, it must remain switched off and out of sight unless its use has been expressly authorised for a specific purpose.

Support for the Victim

Where an incident has involved the victimisation, harassment, alarm or distress of another pupil or member of staff, the school will provide support for the victim. This should be discussed with the victim's family or, where the incident involves a member of staff, appropriate support will be obtained. This might be the designated staff welfare person or the victim's union. To support the rehabilitation of a victim, the following support may be offered in consultation with the victim and their family or support person. Our schools may:

- Follow up with the victim and family and agree a suitable way forward to facilitate an effective closure for the victim to the incident.
- Offer one to one support through the mental Health First Aiders.
- Ensure that the perpetrators, and any others involved, are educated about the impact of their actions on the victim.
- Ensure a fully documented case history of the incident is recorded and secured in the relevant file.
- Senior staff will review the PSHE & E-Safety curriculums to ensure all areas

- are appropriately covered.
- Where material has been posted online about a victim, school will provide support in getting the material removed.

Smart Watches

Smart watches and other personal smart devices with similar functionality to mobile phones are included within this policy where they can send or receive notifications/messages, make calls, access the internet or record audio/video. Such devices must not be used or accessed by pupils during the school day and should be securely stored where they are brought to school. The Federation may make reasonable adjustments or agreed exceptions where necessary.

Personal Mobiles – Staff

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones to make or receive calls, texts, messages or notifications during contact time with children, except where necessary for an immediate emergency or an authorised work-related purpose.
- Personal mobile phones should be switched to silent and kept out of sight and inaccessible to pupils during contact time.
- Personal mobile phones must not normally be used in areas where children are present, including classrooms and playgrounds. Any necessary use must be brief, professional and for an authorised purpose.
- Use of personal phones should normally be limited to non-contact time and areas where children are not present, such as the staff room or office.
- Staff must protect access to their phones with appropriate security measures and must not store or share school information, photographs or recordings on personal devices unless specifically authorised.
- Staff must report any concerning or inappropriate use of mobile devices by another adult to the Head of School/Executive Head Teacher, DSL or through the appropriate safeguarding reporting route.

Mobile Phones for work related purposes

The Federation recognises that mobile phones can provide a useful means of communication on off-site activities and in emergencies on site, such as a lockdown. Where a personal phone is used for an authorised work-related purpose, staff must use it appropriately and professionally, protect children's personal information and ensure that any school-related data or images are handled in accordance with the Federation's safeguarding, data protection and acceptable-use arrangements.

- Mobile use on these occasions is appropriate and professional.
- Mobile phones should not normally be used to make contact with parents/carers during school trips; relevant communications should be made through the school office. A personal phone may be used in an emergency or where an authorised trip/residential arrangement requires it. Staff should use the school's approved communication arrangements wherever available and avoid exposing their personal number.
- Where parents are accompanying trips, they should be reminded not to contact other parents or use their phone to photograph or record children

other than their own, in accordance with the school's photography and safeguarding arrangements.

Staff may not use their mobile phones:

- Staff must not use personal mobile phones to take, store or share photographs or videos of children. School-owned devices should be used for authorised photographs and recordings, with the relevant parental permissions and school procedures in place.

Photographs or videos of children must not be stored on personal devices or personal cloud accounts. Where an image is accidentally captured on a personal device in an authorised emergency or exceptional circumstance, it must be reported promptly and transferred securely to the school system and deleted from the personal device as soon as practicable, in accordance with the Federation's data protection procedures.

Volunteers, Visitors, Governors and Contractors

All volunteers, visitors, governors and contractors are expected to follow the Federation's expectations on mobile phone and smart-device use while on the premises, particularly regarding photography, recording, confidentiality and safeguarding.

On arrival, such visitors will be informed of our expectations around the use of mobile phones.

Parents

While we would prefer parents not to use their mobile phones while at school, we recognise that this would be impossible to regulate and that many parents see their phones as essential means of communication at all times.

We therefore ask that parents' use of mobile phones while on the school site is courteous, appropriate and consistent with safeguarding expectations.
courteous and appropriate to the school environment.

Parents may photograph or video school events only where the school has permitted this and in accordance with the school's photography and safeguarding guidance. Parents must not publish or share images or recordings containing children other than their own without appropriate permission, and should follow any specific restrictions communicated by the school for an event.

Please refer to the safety agreement form all parents are asked to sign and the guidance on the Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children.

Related policies and guidance

This policy should be read alongside:

- Federation Behaviour Policy;
- Safeguarding/Child Protection Policy;
- Online Safety Policy;
- ICT Acceptable Use arrangements;
- Use of Photographic Images and Videos of Children; Data Protection arrangements;
- The DfE guidance on Mobile Phones in Schools and Searching, Screening and Confiscation

in Schools.

Appendix 1

RECORD OF CONTENTS OF MOBILE PHONE EXAMINATION

Pupil/Class	Date	Time	Examined By	Witnessed by	Phone Contents

RECORD OF PHONECONFISCATION

Pupil/Class	Date	Time	Removed by	Returned to	Returned by